



Tri-County Ministry News

We exist to serve Christ in harmony with our member churches and communities.

From Pastor Sherri

RISK, CHANGE, and the HOLY SPIRIT

This week, I have been scouring the Tri-County churches for an extra directory to give to a new member. I came across the first Tri-County Ministry directory from 1993 and was delighted as I perused the pictures and history of Tri-County Ministry. I saw family photographs of you as you were raising your children; it is remarkable how many of you look like you did over two decades ago! I look at your smiling faces and I can't help but smile back at your pictures. I see the faces of many of your spouses whom I never met and who have gone on to be with our Lord. I see the smiles of others and reflect on their funerals. I especially enjoy the toothless smiles on some who have their own children now.

It is good to reflect on prior years to see from where we have come. The introductory letter in the 1993 directory talks about changes, risk, and the nudge of the Holy Spirit. I realize that forming Tri-County Ministry was all about risk and changes. The Holy Spirit's fingerprints were all over the process.

We as churches of Tri-County Ministry are in the process of Annual Meetings. We review 2015 and that is a good thing. But part of the process is placing new leadership for 2016. What risks and changes are we as leaders and community members willing to take in the coming year? How about the years to come? Our congregations are not made up of the exact same people that we were in 1993. Tri-County is made up of different churches than in 1993. The staff structure has changed from 1993. Can we really operate as we did in 1993?

Even with all the changes to this parish over the years, I know that God has not abandoned us. I know the Holy Spirit has called Pastor Kara and myself to Tri-County at this time and in this place. I know that the leadership teams coming together in each congregation are being called to serve by the Holy Spirit. I challenge each congregation to discern where God is moving among us to proclaim the Word of Jesus Christ in our words and in our actions.

Paul speaks in Philippians 1:15 about proclaiming Christ. He says, *"Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will."* He goes on to say in verse 18, *"What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way...and in that I rejoice."* This gives me hope. Whatever our faults and shortcomings, Christ is proclaimed despite us.

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(From Pastor Sherri continued)

The Eastern North Dakota Synod has a focus this year on hunger, poverty, and racial injustice. We know that we are part of the Eastern North Dakota Synod. How is God calling your congregation to participate in this calling? If you doubt that we are to participate, then look around you. Is there no one who goes hungry in your neighborhood? Is there no poverty in our communities? What is our abundance that we are able to share? What gifts do we have that we are hoarding for ourselves? What can we risk in the name of Jesus Christ?

On February 13, the Tri-County Council along with staff and lay preachers will meet for a retreat from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm at Red Willow. We will be identifying spiritual gifts. We will be looking at who we are and who is God calling us to be. We will be visioning for the future and putting plans together on how to make that vision a reality. If you are a member of the council or a lay leader, please make every effort to join us for this event.

I am excited about the possibilities for 2016 and I pray that you are too. When the disciples told Jesus to send the people away to find something to eat because it was late, Jesus answered them, "You give them something to eat." They brought what they had and Jesus blessed it. All ate and were filled. What can we, as Tri-County, hand to Jesus for him to bless?

"Go and make disciples baptizing them... And remember, I am with you always..."

(Jesus talking to his disciples in the Gospel of Matthew.)

Bible studies in TCM

If you are thirsting dig more deeply in The Word, you may want to add a Bible study your calendar. Currently, we have four studies happening in our parish.



- ◆ Monday mornings in **McHenry**: 10:30 at the home of Nancy Kjelgaard. Video series "The Bible" covering the Old Testament.
- ◆ Tuesday mornings in **Binford**: 9:00 at Trinity, beginning February 9. Binford studies usually cover a six-week series or so, and then take a break. A study to coincide with our Lenten series will begin in February.
- ◆ Wednesday mornings in **McVile**: 9:00 at the church. McVile will also have the Lenten study beginning in February.
- ◆ The third Monday of the month at **Hannaford**: 2:00 at Jill Larson's house. This group covers the WELCA Bible study from the "Gather" magazine.

Giving Hearts Day

February 11

Donate \$10 or more to Red Willow Ministries on February 11 and your donation will be matched up to \$4,000.

Give at impactgiveback.org





Souper Bowl Sunday

February 7

Who are you for, the Broncos or the

Panthers?

Our congregations have the option of doing a special Souper Bowl offering on the morning of the big game. Proceeds may be designated by the congregational council/session.

Bring your loose change / extra cash / or a check made out to your congregation.

- **A couple of big dates for this summer's calendar:**
- **June 18-19: Red Willow Bible Camp's 90th Anniversary**
- **July 16-17, 2016: McVille Lutheran's 100th Anniversary**



First Communion Class Saturday, March 12

Morning class of between 2 and 3 hours



No age limit. Please contact a pastor if you have questions.

We need to know who will be taking the class so the site can be set.

Registration deadline is March 1. Please contact either pastor or the TCM parish office to sign up.

A thank you from the staff

During these past couple of months, our Sunday morning preaching rotation has been much more complicated than usual. Most of this has to do with Christmas programs and then annual meetings. Some of our congregations have had much more pulpit supply than others. This isn't going unnoticed by the staff.

We do want to thank each of our congregations for being so cooperative and understanding with the scheduling. The scheduling needs to be done in a practical way, but it maybe doesn't always seem practical.

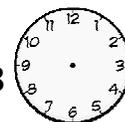
We also want to say a thank you to our lay preachers: Marla, Truley, Marvin, Gilbert, and Kelli. Your ministry plays a huge part in making our Sunday mornings work.

Pastor Sherri, Pastor Kara, & Theresa

Worship time alerts

First Presbyterian

♦ 9:45 February 7, 14, & 28



One more thank you

Corey Erickson (Our Savior's of McHenry), Pat Larson (Faith), Dennis Jungels (First Presbyterian), and Marvin Goplen (Trinity) have each completed two terms on the Tri-County Ministry Council.

Many many thanks to each of them for their service to our parish!

Lent in Tri-County Ministry

Our Worship

Once again, the season of Lent has arrived and with it comes special sermon series! Sunday services will be focusing on the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ. We will hear stories of how Jesus gave hope to the hopeless and humbled the proud.

Starting on Ash Wednesday, we will be reflecting on what it means to live as the people of God, as people who live with the cross and the empty tomb, as people who have been humbled and yet remain hopeful. We have daily devotionals available for both adults and children, a 6 week Bible study series, and a sermon series — “Living Lent” — for Wednesday worship services. Each week, we will have a different focus: PONDER our relationship with God and one another, reflect on God's PURPOSE in and for our lives, what it means that we are among PEOPLE in this world, faith brought to life through PROCLAIMing about Christ, PRAISE in the midst of sorrow because of what God has done through Christ crucified, and remember the PAIN of rejection and loss with the love of God who wipes away every tear.

Whether through reading a devotion, attending a Bible study or worshipping, we hope that you will join us on this Lenten journey of reflection on what it means that we follow Jesus Christ, knowing that life encompasses both good and bad, pain and sorrow, love and hope. We are the people who know the cross (suffering) and the empty tomb (rejoicing).

Our Project

If you were to go to the website for Lutheran World Relief, you would see that there is an urgent need for School Kits. Voila, our 2016 Lenten project!

Beginning on Ash Wednesday (February 10), weekly donations may be brought to our churches.

- ◆ Week 1: **4 notebooks (70 sheets each)**
- ◆ Week 2: **12 inch ruler with both inch and centimeter markings**
- ◆ Week 3: **5 unsharpened #2 pencils and a 2 1/2 inch eraser**
- ◆ Week 4: **5 black or blue ballpoint pens**
- ◆ Week 5: **A box of 16 or 24 crayons**
- ◆ Week 6: **A blunt safety scissor and a pencil sharpener**

These items will be packed into backpacks and shipped in May. And what about the backpacks? Standard backpacks are not allowed. LWR requests sturdy drawstring cloth backpacks, approximately 14”x17”, with shoulder straps. These backpacks may be sewn (pattern available on the LWR website) or purchased (vendors of the backpacks also listed on the LWR website). Backpacks may be brought to your church any time. Or, the backpacks be a project that the Sunday School or another group within the church wants to sponsor.

Let’s see if we can get 175 school kits put together in TCM!



40 Acts for Lent

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			February 10 Attend an Ash Wednesday service	11 Donate to a non-profit	12 Call a senior citizen	13 Bring a meal to a friend
14	15 Give to charity	16 Pray for children	17 Find stations of the Cross	18 Fast from gossip	19 Read one Bible verse	20 Avoid a temptation
21	22 Create space for silence in your day	23 Pray for peace	24 Exercise	25 Read something inspirational	26 Share a coffee/tea with someone	27 Do a daily chore with joy
28	29 Assist someone with their chore	March 1 Fast from TV	2 Pray for a friend in need	3 Call a distant friend	4 Fast from Technology	5 Pray for our world leaders
6	7 Pray for our world leaders	8 Ponder any bad habits	9 Give your time to someone in need	10 Create some silence in your day	11 Fast from using a credit card	12 Pray for someone who has hurt you
13	14 Pray for your enemies	15 Don't turn on the car radio	16 Pay a few sincere compliments	17 Celebrate St. Patrick's Day	18 Tell someone what you are grateful for	19 Say a Prayer for a loved one
20	21 Read the Passion story in the Bible	22 Write a thank you note	23 Pray for peace	24 Attend Maundy Thursday service	25 Attend Good Friday service	26 Build an hour of silence into your day

TRI-COUNTY MINISTRY STAFF

Rev. Sherri Frederikson.....676-2762
(cell) 336-688-2879
PastorSherri@yahoo.com
Box 226, Binford ND 58416

Rev. Kara Wiechmann322-4926
(cell) 605-770-4005
pastorkaraw@gmail.com
Box 115, McVile ND 58254

TCM Parish Administrator
Theresa Fiebiger676-2761
trinitybinford@mlgc.com

TCM CONGREGATIONS

Faith of Hannaford769-2387
faithl@ictc.com

First Presbyterian of Cooperstown
797-3112
jejohnson99@yahoo.com

Grace of Grace City.....674-3112
kmac@daktel.com

McVile Lutheran Church322-4952
mcvilleparish@gondtc.com

Our Savior's, Kloten.....322-4952
mcvilleparish@gondtc.com

Our Savior's of McHenry....785-2117
trinitybinford@mlgc.com

Trinity of Binford676-2761
trinitybinford@mlgc.com

Tri-County Ministry
Box 226
Binford, ND 58416
Phone 676-2761
email: trinitybinford@mlgc.com

website: www.tricountyministry.org
blog: www.tricountyministry.com
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Tri-County Ministry News is
published nine times per year:
January, February, March, April, June,
August, September, October, and
November.

TCM Council & Leadership Retreat
“The Power That Drives Us”

Saturday, February 13, 2016
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Red Willow Bible Camp

Brief meeting
Discussion of Spiritual Gifts
Visioning

All TCM Council members should be at this retreat. A noon meal will be served.